8. Periodic High Level co-ordination Meetings with Government Railway Police and Local Police are conducted to analyze the crime position with a view to taking suitable preventive measures.

9. Steps have been taken to sensitize the RPF personnel to the problems of women passengers by organizing workshops and seminars.

10. Ladies' compartments are escorted in some suburban areas by lady constables of GRP and RPF.

11. Special squads consisting of ladies ticket checking staff and lady RPF personnel have been formed in Central, South Central and Western Railways to assist the women passengers.

(e) The directives will check crime against women to a satisfactory extent.

Recruitment of Staff in CSIR

1459. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether as per the CSIR Service Rules, 1994 for recruitment of Scientific, Technical and Support Staff, cases of equivalence of qualification for recruitment have to be decided as per the list notified by CSIR;

(b) whether cases not covered in aforesaid have to be referred to CSIR Headquarters for determination of equivalence; and

(c) if so, the details of such cases referred for approval and the cases approved viz. name of institute and the reasons during the last three years, year-wise, item-wise?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Biotech Research in India and China

1460. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:
SHRI NANA DESHMUKH:

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item published in The Hindustan Times dated the 4th February, 2002 captioned, 'China surges ahead of India in biotech race';

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefore, when both the countries reportedly began research in biotech in agriculture in mid-1980s;

(c) whether India had genetically modified sixteen agricultural plants, but approved for field trials and four for commercialization, whereas the comparable figures for China are 141, 45 and 31, respectively;

(d) if so, what are the reasons for so much down trend on biotech research in India; and

(e) what remedial steps are being taken by Government to augment biotech in agriculture, on large-scale?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT): (a) Yes, Sir. The Government is aware of the news item.

(b) and (c) India entered into biotech research in agriculture in late 80's Research was undertaken on the development of several transgenic crops for pest resistance, value addition, biotic and abiotic stress resistance in more than 40 institutions. Under the provisions of Rules, 1989 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, environmental safety aspects were considered and appropriate Biosafety guidelines and institutional mechanisms have been established. Indian research efforts have been focused on varieties suitable for Indian agro-climatic conditions. China also ventured into this area in mid 80's. Their Rules and Guidelines at National level for conducting research and commercialization of transgenic crops have been formulated recently. A number of transgenic crops developed by Indian institutions are at different levels of laboratory, green house and field level testing. Crops like Cotton, Mustard, Potato, Tomato, Tobacco, Rice Brinjal, Cauliflower and Cabbage are at advanced stage of field trials. No transgenic crop is yet approved for commercial release.

(d) and (e) The agriculture biotechnology research in India is growing rapidly at a large number of research institutions being supported by the Government. The plant Molecular Biology Programmes has focused on priority crops like Cotton, Mustard, Wheat and Rice and other legumes. A national Centre for Plant Genome Research is focusing on sequencing the genome of

Chickpea. A National Research Centre on Plant Biotechnology at Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi, has been conducting plant biotechnology research. India is also partner in the International Rice Genome Sequencing Project. Towards the use of transgenics, a National Transgenic Containment and Quarantine Facility at National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR), New Delhi has been setup to facilitate research taking care of all biosafety aspects. Government is also supporting M.Sc. course in Agricultural Biotechnology in 7 Agricultural Universities to generate skilled human resource. The biosafety procedures have been further streamlined with 185 Institutional Biosafety Committees. (IBSCs) already established in various research institutions and Industrial Research & Development units. With the accelerated pace of research in transgenics, field trials of Mustard, Potato, Brinjal and Tomato are very promising.

Identification of Seismic Zones by Indo-French Task Force

1461. SHRI P. N. SIVA: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indo-French task force is likely to identify seismic zones;

(b) if so, the manner in which this is likely to be different from the currently identified seismic zones; and

(c) in what manner the new exercise is likely to help our disaster management?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT): (a) to (c) Sir, there is no proposal to identify seismic zones under Indo-French collaboration programme. The seismic zoning map of India is published by Bureau of Indian Standards and periodically updated incorporating inputs from various Indian agencies. The latest map published in 1986, is presently under revision. However, specific research projects in the area of natural disaster mitigation, including earthquakes are being discussed under the umbrella of S&T cooperation between India and France. Such scientific research inputs are critical to improving preparedness levels for effective disaster management.